

Ken Colburn, Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM)
Credits Lisa Rector

Ken Colburn talked about the Universal Data Interface project. The grant started in 2000 when Maine made arrangements with EPA to update their data transfer to AFS. After finding it difficult to do as a state, they turned to NESCAUM to help.

EPA had developed the software for a UI, but it was on a DOS platform. NESCAUM converted it, made it usable, and ported it to the Internet. Next, they wanted to do a second effort to incorporate high priority violator information, a major thrust for EPA and a major challenge for the data systems.

They created a drag and drop systems in the UI, which keyed in the information, which allowed timely information to be entered and helped EPA assemble its APB reports. NESCAUM is now working with New York and Oklahoma Title V and CEM (Continuous Emission Monitoring) data, which have not previously been entered into AFS. There is also other software that will report stack test data.

The system is growing quickly. Once you provide a smooth way of transferring data between states and EPA, why not do more?

Results: There was initially only one state using UI, and now there are 14 states using it!

People spend less time entering data, and it improved the quality of the data EPA gets.

Some notable direct achievements:

Nebraska reduced their time from 20 hours to 1 hour

Maine reduced time by 69%

The Oklahoma reporting process was reduced by 67% and the quality of the data coming to EPA has been higher.

One lesson is that the project can be served by a regional organization. Even though NESCAUM is focused on the Northeast, the software is portable and has an immediate multiplier effect.

The second lesson is about the resource use. It is better to get more data, more quickly. There are pressures on OECA that mitigate this. OECA has a history of just being enforcement, and now has a greater emphasis on data gathering and targeting and better vision in executing and targeting.

Questions & Answers

Q – How does the UI fit between the National Exchange Network and AFS?

A - Basically, it does just that. AFS is a bit of a caveman, so this software resides on the states' systems and ports data to the exchange network to go to AFS.

Q – If I have Access, can I use the UI?

A – My understanding is, yes.